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UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS

Episode #65

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12:30 to 1:30 P.M. C.D.S.T. JUNE 1, 1933 THURSDAY

ORCHESTRA

ANNOUNCER: "UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS" ---

ORCHESTRA: QUARTETTE

ANNOUNCER: On an average national forest, such as the one where our old friend Ranger Jim Robbins and his assistant Jerry are carrying on, there are usually from four to six hundred miles or more of telephone lines. The telephone is the main reliance of the forest ranger for the transaction of business on his district. Frequently, storms and heavy snows of winter work havoc with this communication system, and one of the big spring jobs of every ranger is to see that the network of telephone lines on his district is in place and in good working condition. This is a job that must be carefully and systematically done, for a single break in a line may seriously impair the value of the system at a time, as in a fire emergency, when minutes and seconds count in getting through a telephone call.

The last time we saw Ranger Jim and Jerry on telephone line inspection work, Jerry's day was somewhat disrupted, you remember, by an encounter with a bear, which he did now know was a lumber camp pet. Today as we tune in at the Pine Cone Ranger Station, we find telephone repair work again in order, and Jerry and Slim, the packer, are at the ranger station getting together some needed telephone equipment. Here they are --

SLIM: One roll number nine wire.

JERRY: Check.

SLIM: Fifty split tree insulators.

JERRY: Check.

SLIM: One dozen dry-cell batteries.

JERRY: Check . - Say - got a new mule, Slim? That one over there?

SLIM: Yeah, that's Edith. I just got 'er t'other day.

JERRY: Nice-looking pack-mule, ain't she.

SLIM: Yes sir, she's a good looker all right.

JERRY: How is she on packing?

SLIM: Well - Edith gets kinda balky once to a while, but gen'rally speakin' she's purty reliable, I reckon. - Did yuh git them dry-cell batteries?

JERRY: Yep - check. What are you grinning about now?

SLIM: (CHUCKLES) I was jest a-wonderin' -- Mabbe that bear was jest a-purrin' to yuh - 'stead o' growlin' like you thought.

JERRY: (PEEVED) Say - what's eatin' you. One more crack outa you about that bear and you'll never pack another mule.

SLIM: (CHUCKLING) Well now - taint everybody kin git treed by a tame bear.

JERRY: Aw, you make me sick. Everybody in town thinks he's got to keep kiddin' me - I'm getting plenty tired of hearing about it, and I don't want to hear any more about it.

BESS: (OFF, CALLS) Oh Jerry --

JERRY: (CALLS) Yes, Mrs. Robbins?

BESS: (OFF) Mary's here.

JERRY: (CALLS) All right, I'll be right in.

SLIM: Schoolma'am's a-callin', eh?

JERRY: Yeah, you go ahead and check that stuff, I'll be back in a few minutes.

SLIM: Take your time, she prob'ly wants to congratulate yuh on the way you handled that bear. (CHUCKLES)

JERRY: Aw, lay off, will yuh.

(SLIM FADES OFF CHUCKLING)

(DOOR SLAMS)

JERRY: Hello, Mary.

MARY: Why, Jerry, what on earth is the matter? You look so upset.

JERRY: (SURLY) Aw, I'm all right. Don't worry about me.

MARY: Of course I worry about you, Jerry. You mustn't let yourself get down like that. I want you to be happy and smiling - Smile for me, Jerry.

JERRY: Say, what are you trying to do, kid me? - Like all the rest of the folks?

MARY: Of course not, Jerry. - Come on, be a nice boy and give Mary a smile.

JERRY: What's the idea?

MARY: Not even a teeny-weeny little smile?

JERRY: Gosh, do I have to get a razzing from you too, besides from everybody else?

MARY: Oh now Jerry, you aren't going to let a little razzing bother you, are you?

JERRY: Then somebody did tell you about the tame bear chasing me up a tree. I knew they would.

MARY: Why, of course. Everybody thinks it's a good joke on you.

JERRY: Well, I don't.

MARY: Now Jerry, you should be bigger than that. You ought to be big enough to stand a joke on yourself.

JERRY: Gosh, even you're down on me.

MARY: Why, Jerry - I've been sticking up for you all the time.

JERRY: Have you, Mary - honest?

MARY: Of course I have. <u>You</u> didn't know it was a tame bear, and I've told all these gossips that if they had been in your place <u>they</u> wouldn't have known it either.

JERRY: Gee, Mary, you're a peach.

MARY: (SOFTLY) Oh, Jerry, - you know I —

(DOOR OPENS)

BESS: (SLIGHTLY OFF, CALLING) Oh Jerry — (CONFUSED) Oh-oh! <u>Excuse me</u>!

JERRY: (CONFUSED) Why - uh - what is it - Mrs. Robbins?

BESS: (GOING OFF) Nothing at all.

(DOOR SLAMS)

(MUSICAL INTERLUDE)

JIM: Well, Jerry, - I reckon that about finishes up this stretch of telephone line.

JERRY: Looks that way, Jim. - Boy! The wind sure blows up here on the ridge.

JIM: Yep. There's still some pretty good-sized snowbanks left up here to keep it chilly. - Want to move over behind the rock there, and take a breathing spell?

JERRY: Yeah, let's. I got kinda het up fixing the breaks in that last mile of line. - The heavy snows sure wrecked it aplenty.

JIM: Well, she's all fixed up now. I rang up Bess from the lookout station and she said she could hear me clear as a bell.

JERRY: Checked okay, huh. - What's become of Slim?

JIM: He went on with the pack mules to the guard cabin where we're going to bed down tonight. I reckon he oughta have the mules unloaded and the coffee pot a-boilin' by the time we get there.

JERRY: I sure hope so. - Hey, what's that funny little gray animal over there - see? - sitting over there in the rock slide?

JIM: Uh? Oh, that's a Cony. - Cute little beggar, ain't he, - with that round face of his, and the big ears? He's got a tail too, but it's so short you can't see it.

JERRY: What's he doing way up here?

JIM: This is his home - up above timberline. - You always find him in the rock slides along with the wood rats and marmots.

JERRY: But I'd think he'd starve in winter, when the snow gets deep.

JIM: Not that little fellow. He's the greatest farmer you ever saw.

JERRY: Farmer? How do you mean?

JIM: It's hay crops he harvests. If you happen up here in the fall, you'll see him busy gathering grass and sedges and the like. He carries them deep into the rock pile and stores them so they're protected from the snow and rain, and that's his "hay crop" for the winter - see? Some of the piles I've seen had more'n a bushel of cut hay in 'em.

JERRY: He must be an industrious little cuss.

JIM: So he is. (CHUCKLES) I guess he's one farmer that don't have to worry about market prices - or about somebody foreclosing on his ranch.

JERRY: Well, he sure picked a grand country to live in.

JIM: Yep. - I kinda get a kick out of being up here myself. How'll you sleep tonight, Jerry?

JERRY: Oh Boy! Like a log!

JIM: (CHUCKLING) That's good. -- Let's see - figurin' what we got done today, I s'pect we'll be out about two more days on this trip, before we finish up the telephone lines. That'll get us back to the station late the day after tomorrow.

JERRY: That'll be sooner than Mrs. Robbins expected, won't it?

JIM: (CHUCKLES) It'll be sooner'n we told her to expect us, but I reckon she won't be surprised.

JERRY: Say - how does a ranger's wife ever know when he's going to get home from a field trip?

JIM: Well - sometimes he tells her when he thinks he'll be gettin' back - sometimes it's a woman's intuition, maybe - but most often I s'pect it's some little peculiarity of her husband's that kinda lets the cat out of the bag.

JERRY: Yeah, but very often the ranger himself doesn't know, Jim. He may run into a fire or some kind of trouble that needs straightening out - or something else may happen to delay him. You know what I mean.

JIM: Yes, of course. There's all kinds of emergencies that may come up, but I was thinking of the ordinary field trips a ranger makes.

JERRY: I see. What did you mean by "little peculiarities" that rangers have?

JIM: Well - (CHUCKLES) Take old Bill Durbin for instance - Ever hear of Bill Durbin who's been a forest supervisor in the California Region for eighteen years or so?

JERRY: Sure, I met him once at a rangers' meeting. He's that gray haired old timer with the West Virginia drawl.

JIM: Yep, that's him. - He's been in the Forest Service for thirty years - and as fine a man as you ever shook hands with. There isn't a fellow who ever worked for Bill Durbin that doesn't swear by him.

JERRY: Didn't he retire from the Forest Service a few months ago?

JIM: Yes - reached the age limit. - We were all mighty sorry to see him go, too. - But in his heart, Bill will keep on being a Forest Service man as long as he lives.

JERRY: Well, what was his "peculiarity".

JIM: Oh yes - (CHUCKLES). I come mighty near forgettin' what we were talkin' about. Well, Bill's weakness was chewin' tobacco. Give him a plug of tobacco and he could sit down in the office or out on a stump in the woods and convince the most cantankerous old codger you could find that all his troubles were just imaginary. - (CHUCKLES) Well, one day a forest inspector came up to visit Bill's forest when he was away in the field. Nobody knew just where Bill was, so the inspector went over to see his wife, Mrs.Durbin - a mighty fine woman, too - thinkin' that perhaps she'd know when Bill was comin' back.

JERRY: Did she?

JIM: Bill hadn't said a word to 'er about it before he left, but she told the inspector she was sure he'd be home the next night 'long about supper time.

JERRY: How'd she figure that out?

JIM: Well, she'd packed up Bill's knapsack for the trip, so she knew just how many plugs of chewin' tobacco he had with 'im, and she'd figured up about when he'd run out of tobacco and come hom. (BOTH LAUGH)

JERRY: That's a good one. Did he show up the next night?

JIM: Right on the dot. - They were just sitting down to supper when Bill blew in.

JERRY: (LAUGHS) That's keeping tabs on your husband, I'd say.

JIM: Yep. - Look at the setting sun on that little lake down there, Jerry.

JERRY: Gosh, yes! - It's sure great up here!

JIM: Yep. There's mighty few people ever see much of it, though, - except the mountaineers that hike up here, and the airplane pilots that fly over it. - A lot of folks don't know what they're missing, Jerry.

JERRY: Maybe they wouldn't appreciate it if they did.

JIM: You'd think not, all right, the careless, indifferent way some folks try to treat our forest - but if they couldn't appreciate this, why something's wrong with 'em -- Hmm - (MUSING) Gray granite peaks - clothed in everlasting snowbanks - with sapphire lakes for jewels - and fleecy clouds for a bridal veil --

JERRY: Huh? - What did you say, Jim?

JIM: Oh, nothing. I was just filling up my innards with the beauty of it all.

JERRY: Oh. - Gosh, it's sure great --

JIM: Yep.

JERRY: Say -- Jim -- uh --

JIM: What?

JERRY: Oh - uh - nothing special - I just started to - kinda -

JIM: (CHUCKLING SOFTLY) 'bout to say something about the schoolma'am, eh?

JERRY: Well - uh -

JIM: Well, why not?

JERRY: Why not what?

JIM: Why don't you marry that girl? She's a prize, all right.

JERRY: (DRY LAUGH) What on? An assistant ranger's salary?

JIM: Well, Bess and I got married on less than you're getting.

JERRY: Yeah, but times were different then.

JIM: Times weren't so different, Jerry. I reckon you're not the first young fellow that found the trail lookin' pretty rocky. Most of us have to keep on plugging up a mighty steep grade all along if we want those good things life brings us.

JERRY: Well - I'll think about it.

JIM: (CHUCKLING SOFTLY) Better not think too long, son. - Mary's a mighty attractive girl. Too attractive to stay unattached long.

JERRY: (EXASPERATED) Of course she's attractive - the most attractive girl in the world. Shucks, I've thought it all out a hundred times, Jim - and I can't do it. I tell you I just can't do it, that's all.

JIM: Can't do what? What you talking about?

JERRY: I can't ask her to marry me. You know I couldn't afford the things she ought to have.

JIM: Nonsense, boy. - Mary's a sensible girl; she's earned her own living teaching school you know, so she knows the value of a dollar.

JERRY: Yeah, I know that, but —

JIM: She'd make you a fine little wife. Everybody in the community likes her - and would like to see you —

JERRY: (BREAKING IN) Everybody in the community, huh? - Well, I wish everybody in the community would mind their own affairs and let me 'tend to mine. ---

(PAUSE) (SEVERAL SECONDS)

JIM: Have you noticed those red flowers over there, Jerry? - growing in the edge of that snowbank, right where the spring gushes out?

JERRY: Yeah.

JIM: Pretty, aren't they?

JERRY: Yeah.

JIM: What I like best up here, though, are the old gnarled trees that grow at the edge of timberline.

JERRY: Uh Huh.

JIM: Like that windswept pine over there —see?

JERRY: Yeah.

JIM: Look at that old boy. - I bet he's two hundred years old. - See how he's bent and twisted by the storms. -- He's still holding on, though. You don't see him laying down on the job because of the hardships he's had to face - or the storm he knows are yet to come. -- (PAUSE) - Well, s'pose we head for the horses, Jerry.

JERRY: All right. They're down there at the edge of that clump of timber.

JIM: Uh huh. We'll high-tail it for the guard station and see if Slim has that coffee pot a-boilin'.

JERRY: Yeah. --- Say - Jim - uh - I've just been thinkin' --

JIM: Take it easy, Jerry. Every man should make his own decisions.

JERRY: I'd like to believe you're right, Jim, - about Mary, but -- well, I just can't see my way clear.

JIM: Why don't you talk it over with Mary? You know it's partly her affair, too.

JERRY: (HESITATINGLY) Yes - I know I should - but somehow I --

JIM: Yes?

JERRY: I - guess - maybe I will, - (EAGERLY) Yeah, I'm going to do it, Jim! - Shucks - we've got to be up here two more days yet.

(FADEOUT WITH JIM CHUCKLING SOFTLY)

ANNOUNCER:

Well, now, did you hear that? It looks like this little love affair of Jerry's is beginning to get serious. —

Quite a little talk Ranger Jim and Jerry had up there in the high mountain country today, wasn't it? Have you ever noticed how the deep, silent forests and rugged mountain heights seem to bring men closer together? There's something about our great forests, aside from all practical considerations, that makes us love them more and more, the better we know them.

Ranger Jim and Jerry will be with us again next Thursday at this time. "Uncle Sam's Forest Rangers" comes to you as a presentation of the National Broadcasting Company, with the co-operation of the United States Forest Service.

ih/11:35 A.M.
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